

Conference on Disarmament

22 February 2011

English

UNITED NATIONS
DEPOSITORY

DEC 11 2013

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and seventh plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 22 February 2011, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Pedro Oyarce(Chile)

The President (*speak in Spanish*): The 1207th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is called to order.

Before starting our work, I would like to convey to the Ambassador of New Zealand and to the Government, the people and the families of the victims of the earthquake in that country all our sympathy with regard to the misfortune that has struck them. Please accept, Ambassador, the Conference's expression of sympathy.

I would like to make some general comments before proceeding to the list of speakers. I would first like to extend a most cordial welcome to the new representative of Belgium to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador François Roux, who knows this forum and will certainly continue the contributions that his country has historically made to this Conference. Reflecting the feeling among Conference members, we appreciate the work and the commitment of Canada and Ambassador Marius Grinius with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation. The Canadian President and his team worked hard to inject constructive impetus into this forum.

Chile takes on this responsibility with the clear understanding that we have not been elected, but must assume this task simply on the basis of a democratic rotation. It is also very clear to us that, while the President has capabilities and initiatives, in the final analysis, the course of our action or inaction here is connected to the notion of collective responsibility. My country is committed to multilateral work on disarmament and non-proliferation because we are convinced that multilaterally agreed commitments and standards are a guarantee of collective security.

The latest global developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, specifically the Security Council summit, the nuclear safety summit, the NPT Review Conference, the high-level meeting in New York and the ratification of START, represent a positive trend that we should try to mirror in our substantive work. The failure of this Conference in 2011 would not simply be a waste of resources and opportunities, but would also compromise the effectiveness of the multilateral disarmament system and the non-proliferation regime.

The negotiation of multilateral agreements and the fine-tuning of existing regimes remain crucial for generating a climate of confidence in the international system. These aspects are essential for global security, and the Conference has a responsibility to contribute to this common goal of unity. We must avoid discussions that distract us from the fundamental political goal of the Conference, otherwise this body will sink into irrelevance. We had the opportunity to hold an interactive dialogue with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In our reflections we discerned converging concerns on some aspects of almost all the agenda items. Despite the differences and the various and legitimate interests, we clearly discerned a desire to embark on substantive work. We have heard repeatedly that we have reached a moment that we should perceive as an opportunity to avoid what the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated here in this room: yet another year of routine work. The Secretary-General also referred to the existence of common denominators to enable the Conference to adopt a programme of work taking into consideration these elements or other subsequent proposals that the Conference could adopt by consensus.

Today's formal session is designed precisely to enable an exchange of views, nothing more – an exchange of views on elements that could be included in the programme of work. It is clear that this is a political priority, and we believe it is necessary to continue efforts to reach consensus on this point. The work of the first weeks of the 2011 session during the presidency of Canada followed an indicative timetable and enabled us to reflect particularly on four core issues. The debate has been constructive and substantive, but we must be realistic, I repeat, we must be realistic: this debate does not replace a negotiation,

because for a negotiation to take place changes are certainly needed in the Conference and in contexts outside it, which is essential for activating political will in this body.

The discussion of the core issues showed anew that we have limitations, which, if external conditions do not change, will recur both in this Conference and in other forums. The substantive issue does not involve only the Conference and its rules of procedure but is linked to higher political and strategic interests that are reflected in various agenda items.

We believe that the approach taken during the presidency of Canada can help to progressively delve deeper into the essential and critical elements of each agenda item. That is why the indicative timetable prepared by the presidency of Chile for the next four weeks, which is contained in document CD/WP.564, contains an invitation — no more than that — an invitation to an exchange of views that will be as interactive as possible and cover all the substantive agenda items that we adopted for this session, which are listed in document CD/WP.562. This is a suggestion for organizing our work and giving the delegations and their experts an opportunity to prepare interventions in a timely manner. What I have proposed is not a schedule of activities as referred to in rule 20, and therefore requires no decision. There will be no reports on these meetings, only the usual sound recordings of the plenaries and the corresponding records. These are not negotiations or even preliminary discussions. The goal is to invite delegations to hold more concrete, more targeted exchanges of views and, of course, raise any issues they consider relevant to the future substantive work of the Conference. The allocation of time to each agenda item is without prejudice to the principle of equal treatment of all the agenda items.

The issues of nuclear disarmament and fissile material will, it is understood, be examined under agenda items 1 and 2, following the practice of previous years in the informal discussions on all the agenda items. The issue of nuclear disarmament will be addressed first, followed by that of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The other topics, including the main topics of the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, will be covered under items 3 to 7 in accordance with the practice followed in previous years during the informal discussions on all the agenda items. This indicative timetable is without prejudice to rule 30 of the rules of procedure, under which any member State of the Conference has the right to raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference at a plenary meeting and to present its views on any subject which, in its view, requires attention. In this context, I remind you that if there is agreement in the Conference to deal with a particular subject, this subject can be examined as part of the adopted agenda.

In concluding, I would like to invite you to focus, first, on continued efforts to identify elements that bring us closer to an agreed programme of work. I hope that this morning's exchange of views as well as later consultations will contribute to that goal. Second, I invite you to perform a specific thematic analysis of all the agenda items so as to be better prepared to start substantive work on negotiations, hopefully in the near future. Third, we hope to be able to hold, before the end of our term, an exchange of views on other possible ways to revitalize the Conference, which are numerous. It would also be useful to consider the concerns of the informal group of observer States with regard to the expansion of the Conference.

I would like to conclude by inviting you to continue making productive use of the plenary meetings. Let us try to adopt the spirit that has enabled the conclusion of agreements that have enhanced global security. This appeal will probably be made by the many dignitaries who will soon be arriving for the high-level segment of the Conference.

Before turning to the list of speakers for the exchange of views on items to be included in the programme of work, I would like to make some specific observations that will, I hope — I hope to God that is so — encourage, guide and inspire this exchange, which we trust will be as interactive and timely as possible.

In accordance with rule 28 of the rules of procedure, the President of the Conference must submit to member States a programme of work with a proposed schedule of activities for the plenary meetings of the Conference. This responsibility is, in its initial stage, the President's, but ultimately, I believe it is also a collective responsibility. We will continue the consultations undertaken by the presidency of Canada. At this formal meeting I strongly encourage you to hold an exchange of views to see whether it is possible to identify new elements that could be included in the programme of work. I recognize that devising fresh approaches is not an easy task when one has reviewed the proposals of the past few years, and we have taken care to do so for the past 15 years — I tell you it is not an easy task. However, I think it is valuable to perform this exercise even though it could be argued that we already have some proposals such as those in documents CD/1864, CD/1889 and CD/WP.559. There are at least 10 or so initiatives, proposals and ideas, but the end result is that today we do not have a programme of work. Let us continue to work in formal mode to see whether a real political basis exists for reaching an agreement. Let us ensure that the topic of the programme of work does not become what I would term an almost ritual obstacle.

I would first like to remind you that the Secretary-General himself in this room, in this interactive dialogue some weeks ago, referred to the 2009 programme of work, referred specifically to document CD/1864, and also referred to the fact that there are common denominators for adopting this proposal or a similar proposal which the Conference could adopt by consensus. The Secretary-General also wondered whether an informal process could begin before formal negotiations. He said this in the context of the topic of fissile material, but it could be construed as an invitation to consider the option in a more general, broader thematic way, still within the Conference on Disarmament, in order to develop, to produce a proposal for a programme of work.

The second idea I wish to mention is that the option of a simplified programme of work has been floated, as we all know, and thus it would be useful to know what you think of that, how you would envision a minimalist programme. Would it be only a schedule of activities? How would the issues of negotiating mandates, the establishment of coordinators and the ad hoc working group be resolved? Some interpret the rules of procedure as not requiring the programme of work to include the establishment of working groups in their mandates, but only requiring it to include a schedule of the Conference's activities. I am referring to rule 28. Here we should recall the model offered by the decision which the Conference on Disarmament adopted in 1990, document CD/1036; this involved flexibility and a simple weekly schedule of activities, without requiring agreement on subsidiary bodies or mandates. The Conference used this system as a programme of work until the year 1997. The possible advantages of this approach for those who favoured it were that it obviated the difficulty of establishing mandates and allowed the member States to focus their substantive and thematic work in a progressive way.

A third idea to consider is the option of individual mandates for stand-alone subsidiary bodies. In 1998, without the adoption of a programme of work, decisions CD/1501 and CD/1547 appointing special thematic coordinators and establishing two ad hoc committees — on negative security assurances and the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament — were taken separately. In 2008, the Presidents of the Conference appointed coordinators for the agenda items and distributed an organizational framework for the Conference which included a schedule of meetings. The coordinators held informal meetings and reported to the Presidents on their outcomes. Those who favour

the establishment of individual mandates for specific subsidiary bodies think that that would provide more flexibility for starting substantive work and avoid establishing linkages between the core issues, thus eliminating possible interference that could limit future negotiations.

We have options, we have elements, and I would invite you to consider these and other possibilities for trying to produce a viable text in the current context. Let us not forget that the long history of multilateralism demonstrates that consensus in critical situations — and this is a difficult situation, which is why it has been prolonged — these agreements are usually drafted in general terms and with avoidable and unavoidable ambiguities. This is part of the culture of multilateralism. I hope that today we can reflect in order to facilitate our future work.

Having said that, I would like to give the floor to Ambassador Rao, the Permanent Representative of India, and I would like to mention that the first five delegations to take the floor will be India, as I have noted, the Philippines, Colombia, Brazil and Peru.

Mr. Rao (India): Mr. President, let me begin by joining you and conveying our condolences to the Ambassador of New Zealand for the tragedy which happened there.

As this is the first time that we are speaking under your presidency, let me say how pleased we are to see Chile, a member of the Group of 21 (G21) and a country with which we enjoy friendly and growing relations, preside over our work. We would also like to thank you for undertaking consultations, and we pledge you our support in taking forward the work of the Conference.

India attaches high importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. It has all the relevant players and its rules of procedure provide the necessary assurance to member States that their security interests are fully protected in the conduct of its work. The main vocation of the Conference is the negotiation of multilateral treaties of universal application; discussions in Conference plenary, informal meetings, or whatever we may wish to call them, are not a substitute for negotiations.

With the adoption of the agenda for the 2011 session at its very first meeting on 25 January 2011, the Conference took a significant step forward in undertaking its responsibilities. We support the President's initiative to devote today's plenary to the next priority step of agreeing on a programme of work.

As you may recall, the Conference was able to adopt, by consensus, a programme of work for 2009 contained in document CD/1864, which was itself the result of a difficult compromise. The high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations held in New York on 24 September 2010 demonstrated that what was achieved in May 2009, after much hard work and compromise, still offered a realistic basis of agreement. The Secretary-General of the United Nations in his address to the Conference on Disarmament on 26 January 2011 affirmed this assessment.

As we stated earlier, India will not stand in the way of consensus that emerges on a programme of work, based on the consensus decision contained in CD/1864, if such a decision facilitates the early commencement of substantive work of the Conference, including negotiation of a fissile missile cut-off treaty (FMCT). This is without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament.

However, if there is no consensus on a programme of work, it is incumbent on the President of the Conference on Disarmament to continue consultations to build the necessary consensus on an acceptable programme of work so that the Conference can discharge its responsibilities. We support negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference on

Disarmament as part of its programme of work. We do not favour reopening the long-standing consensus on the mandate of an FMCT which is stated clearly in document CD/1299, and is based on the consensus resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993.

India will continue to contribute to the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament with the aim of the Conference commencing substantive work by reaching consensus on its programme of work as early as possible.

Mr. Garcia (Philippines): Mr. President, I wish to convey our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are deeply encouraged that an Ambassador with extensive multilateral experience and solid diplomatic acumen, who is from a nation with which the Philippines enjoys strong and dynamic relations, is at the helm of our Conference. I would also like to convey our appreciation for the efforts of your predecessor, our colleague Ambassador Marius Grinius of Canada.

Mr. President, since you indicated that under your presidency you would like to conduct an exchange of views on the programme of work, allow me to make a few points. Our delegation, like others in this chamber, maintains that the programmes of work articulated in documents CD/1864, from the Algerian presidency in 2009, and CD/1889, from the Brazilian presidency in 2010, remain good bases from which to eventually realize a programme of work for 2011. As an observer of the G21 and a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, we join our fellow members in expressing our desire to see the realization of a work programme that is balanced and gives due attention to all the core issues, particularly on the need to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention.

I would also like to reiterate the attention we had drawn previously to the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which calls on the Conference on Disarmament to undertake actions that would directly bear on the programme of work: the immediate establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament within the context of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work (action 6); discussion of negative security assurances, not excluding an internationally binding instrument (action 7); and immediate commencement of negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials in accordance with the Shannon report (action 15).

My delegation would also like to underscore the importance it places on the core issue of negative security assurances, particularly on the strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Being a State party to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Free-Weapon Zone, the Philippines appreciates its tangible contribution to the vision of Global Zero, and, accordingly, we wish to advance cooperation and dialogue on such zones in the Conference on Disarmament.

As a member of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, the Philippines feels strongly that the issue of membership enlargement should be included in the agenda of the Conference. The rules of procedure of the Conference call for the periodic review of the question of membership, and we feel that it is high time for the Conference to do so, since the last round of expansion occurred over a decade ago. We reiterate our call for the Conference on Disarmament to appoint a special rapporteur on the question in order to facilitate discussion, without prejudging any particular outcome, which in any case will depend on the consensual decision of all current member States. I also wish to express the readiness of the informal group of observer States to participate constructively and actively in the work of the Conference under your presidency.

In closing, Mr. President, I wish to convey our thanks to you for raising our concerns in your opening statement. Allow me now to convey my appreciation for this opportunity to articulate my delegation's views on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, and to offer our fullest support for the success of your presidency.

Mr. Valencia Muñoz (Colombia) (spoke in Spanish): Mr. President, allow me first to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference and to pledge the full support and cooperation of Colombia in the efforts of the next four weeks. We also join in the expressions of sympathy for and solidarity with the delegation and the people of New Zealand.

Mr. President, thank you for giving us this opportunity today to exchange views on what should be included in a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, which is a key element for starting our substantive work in 2011. We hope that after this meeting we will have a clearer picture of where we are and identify the points that bring us closer together, and will be disposed to focus on them and begin work in the Conference.

In the past weeks we have heard various reminders that the programme of work is a schedule of activities for each meeting, as provided for in rule 28 of our rules of procedure. Others, meanwhile, have contended that a useful and valid programme of work must inevitably establish subsidiary bodies with negotiating mandates, as did the programme of work approved in 2009 (CD/1864), considered by many to be the model par excellence to date.

From Colombia's perspective, and remaining in the context of the rules of procedure, the programme of work is a guide for organizing our work, a schedule of meetings and topics that will enable us to work through the established agenda, which, fortunately, at this 2011 session, we adopted in our first plenary.

The link between rule 28 of the rules of procedure, on the programme of work, and rule 23, on the establishment of subsidiary bodies and their mandates, as it has been used in recent years, is one option we have, but not the only one.

My delegation is flexible regarding any of these approaches. However, we have identified a requirement that applies to all of them: the need to provide ourselves with a time frame and fulfil the negotiating mandate entrusted to us. The discussion on a programme of work should not prevent us from moving forward. We cannot afford to go one more year without accomplishing our task.

In the last few days it has also been frequently stated in this room that the next logical step would be to start negotiations on an agenda item that is already ripe. However, after the fruitful discussions held during the presidency of Canada, a broad picture emerges of near-consensus on other topics that appear to be similarly ripe. We thus wonder if this dynamic indicates that the logical thing might be to take more than one step at a time. It is an open question.

However, as the Ambassador of Brazil said with frank sincerity in previous meetings, what the Conference on Disarmament needs most is the political will to move forward.

And political will requires flexibility and ingenuity. On the one hand, flexibility meaning the courage to recognize the needs of all and the courage to make concessions for the sake of the collective good, which does not imply or mean renouncing each country's legitimate interests. On the contrary, the rigid rules of procedure in our Conference are the greatest guarantee that the product of any negotiation will never be able to harm national interests.

On the other hand, political will requires ingenuity, with a desire to seek various formulations that take into account the concerns and aspirations of each State, and thereby move towards a result that allows us to achieve a more secure world for all.

Each of us bears responsibility in this work, which cannot be left to chance depending on the presidency of the moment. While rule 29 of the rules of procedure requires the presidency to draft a programme of work, each and every one of us can contribute to freeing the Conference from its current impasse.

To this end, we have a large stock of drafts, documents, proposals, studies – in short, a very broad array of material providing a basis on which we can reach agreement and begin work.

And work means negotiation. That is the key word. That is the *raison d'être* of this Conference: to negotiate on substantive and not procedural issues. The Conference on Disarmament cannot continue to limit itself to deliberation, interesting as the discussions might be. The Conference must show that it is fulfilling its mandate. We must not forget that the Conference is a means, not an end in itself. The end is to achieve a more secure world free of nuclear threat.

Colombia is willing to be flexible and inventive, just as it is asking other members to be. My country is firmly committed to this forum, and we hope to see negotiations begin shortly. We hope that this is what everyone wishes.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil) (*speak in Spanish*): Mr. President, Ambassador Pedro Oyarce, I would first like to congratulate you on your inauguration as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you success in your role, since your success will also mean success for the Conference. You can count on the friendship and support of the delegation of Brazil in your efforts. The words you spoke at the start of this meeting were a clear indication of all the dedication and intelligence with which you are going to fulfil your mandate.

(*speak in English*)

Secondly, I would like to thank Ambassador Marius Grinius of Canada for the dedicated manner in which he presided over the work of this body during the previous four weeks.

Mr. President, as you are now taking over your new functions, the idea of promoting an exchange of views on the programme of work is both timely and necessary. The rules of procedure make clear that it is a responsibility of the presidency to present a programme of work for consideration and adoption by the Conference. Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides some guidelines in this connection.

Firstly, the Conference on Disarmament should establish its programme of work based on its agenda, which was adopted on 25 January 2011 as document CD/WP.562. Secondly, the establishment of the programme of work should take place at the beginning of each session. It should therefore be a priority for any presidency to seek its adoption at the earliest possible time.

Thirdly, the programme of work must include a schedule of activities for the session of the Conference on Disarmament. In making this statement, the rules of procedure are conveying that a schedule of activities is not limited to the term of office of the incumbent president. The six presidents at each annual session of the Conference on Disarmament conduct their work based on the schedule of activities related to the programme of work. Since the programme of work is to be observed by different presidents, it does not originate from one Conference on Disarmament presidency, but from the Conference itself.

Fourthly, because it is based on the agenda, the programme of work and the schedule of activities must address all items of the agenda. The programme of work and the schedule should not neglect any of these items. Fifthly, the programme of work should take into account recommendations made to the Conference on Disarmament by the United Nations General Assembly, the proposals presented by member States of the Conference on Disarmament and the decisions of the Conference.

In this connection, I recall that the General Assembly, at its sixty-fifth session, agreed on a number of resolutions making recommendations to the Conference on Disarmament. General Assembly resolutions 65/56, 65/65 and 65/85 called upon the Conference on Disarmament to commence as early as possible its substantive work during its 2011 session, through the adoption of a programme of work.

General Assembly resolution 65/65 also called upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, as soon as possible and as the highest priority, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament early in 2011 and to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

General Assembly resolution 65/80 requested the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances and requested it to report on the results of these negotiations. General Assembly resolutions 65/56, 65/61, 65/65 and 65/72 urged the Conference on Disarmament to immediately commence negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

General Assembly resolution 65/44 invited the Conference on Disarmament to establish a working group under its agenda item on prevention of an arms race in outer space. General Assembly resolution 65/43 recommended that the Conference on Disarmament should actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement and concluding effective international agreements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. General Assembly resolution 65/46 requested the Conference on Disarmament to consider the formulation of principles that could serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control, and informed the Conference that it looked forward to a report on the subject.

With regard to the proposals presented by member States in 2010, I recall that two were made, and I believe that they are still under consideration by member States. They are contained in documents CD/WP.559, introduced by the Belarusian President, and document CD/1889, put forward by the Brazilian President of the Conference. Another decision by the Conference that could help in drawing up a programme of work might be the 2010 report of the Conference on Disarmament, as contained in document CD/1900.

I have presented my comments in a rather schematic manner so as to underline that the rules of procedure already provide a good starting point in our quest for achieving an acceptable programme of work. The road map is there. Yet we all know that some States wish to start negotiations exclusively on one item of the agenda, and that at least one other State has difficulties concerning the proposed mandate for such negotiations.

Notwithstanding, it is always worth recalling that a large number of countries here represented, including Brazil, are prepared to consider proposals for the commencement of negotiations on any of the four core issues of the agenda (nuclear disarmament, fissile material, prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and negative security assurances) as well as on any other issue related to the agenda, since our actual commitment and purpose is to effectively promote nuclear disarmament. We heard this morning, as on many other occasions, reference to the need to maintain the security of a

given State; usually this reference is made here by States that possess nuclear weapons. I think that the need for security is common to all countries and perhaps still more for non-nuclear States.

Mr. Rojas Samanez (Peru) (*speak in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. First of all, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of our Conference and wish you every success in your work. Peru is pleased that a friendly country, Chile — with which we are linked not only by history and geography but by our peoples' deep desire to constantly reaffirm the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations — is chairing the Conference. I take great pleasure in reaffirming my delegation's full support for and cooperation in the achievement of the goals that you, Sir, have set out for this body.

Latin America and the Caribbean region have in the past demonstrated their commitment to international peace and security, as has been pointed out on various occasions in this forum. Perhaps the most significant proof of that commitment is the establishment in the region, more than 40 years ago, of the first populated nuclear-weapon-free zone, under the Treaty of Tlatelolco. It has been followed by other regional agreements and initiatives of various kinds and in various areas of disarmament, which further highlight our nations' commitment to peace. This is another reason why we are very pleased to have you presiding over our deliberations.

I will be brief on this occasion and refer only to topics relating to the organization of our work.

During the presidency of our colleague and friend Ambassador Marius Grinius of Canada, to whom my country wishes to express its great appreciation for his competent leadership of the work of this Conference, we witnessed intense, interesting and instructive exchanges of views between Conference members on the agenda items that most concern us all. The interest and thoroughness with which these were tackled clearly demonstrate their maturity, so that in our view some of them are ready for a more detailed examination and — why not say it? — the start of substantive negotiations, which are the *raison d'être* of this Conference.

But we also heard a range of views and useful information about procedural issues. During this exchange of views, we all agreed that under our rules of procedure the Conference will address topics that prove of interest in plenary meetings, which is exactly what we have been doing since we started this first part of the current session of the Conference. I also think that the references to rules 27 and 28 of the rules of procedure, which detail how the Conference shall organize its work on the basis of an agenda of topics and a programme of work, which will "include a schedule of its activities for that session", were clear.

My delegation therefore believes that we could address all the items on our agenda in plenary meetings and in a manner that would allow us to go beyond the phase of the initial exchange of views and expressions of national positions.

In line with its strong commitment to peace and its deep conviction that the first priority in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation is, and should continue to be, nuclear disarmament, including the cessation of the nuclear arms race, my delegation proposes that we tackle in plenary and without further delay agenda items 1 and 2, under which we could address two of the four "central" topics: nuclear disarmament and fissile material. Simply to use time more efficiently and better frame our discussions, we could, as has been noted in this Conference on numerous occasions, make use of the existing proposals on these issues, such as the proposals of Costa Rica and Malaysia on a model nuclear weapons convention or any other proposal that might seem useful in this regard. In the case of fissile material, we also have, in addition to the Shannon mandate, very

comprehensive proposals drawn up by various Conference members to which we could refer in the constituent parts of the proposed texts.

Regarding the other two central topics, as well as the remaining agenda items, we could and should tackle them progressively in the course of our deliberations.

For some people, the ideas that I have just raised here could represent a serious overdose of optimism, even verging on naivety. They would be surprised to hear, then, that my country is deeply aware of the military-strategic imperatives that exist globally and in some regions of the planet, and underlie the stagnation that has plagued this Conference for more than 15 years.

But a serious reflection on these same imperatives will demonstrate the urgency of addressing them through diplomacy and multilateral negotiation, so that the primary objective of undiminished security for all States can be achieved fully, but with significantly lower levels of all types of weapons. To pretend otherwise, we believe, is to ignore reality, running the grave danger that it will strike us forcefully and unexpectedly to remind us that it exists.

Mr. Strohal (Austria): Mr. President, at the outset I would like to join you in expressing our condolences to New Zealand. Let me congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency and express the hope that, under your guidance, the Conference will take significant steps towards the resumption of its work. I would also like to use this opportunity to convey my wholehearted thanks to our outgoing President, Ambassador Grinius, and his team for their relentless efforts and the excellent way in which they steered our work. I also join you in welcoming our new Belgian colleague.

Indeed, over the past few weeks we have seen a substantial increase in statements that have given us active and interesting plenary meetings. We have had good exchanges of views on the core agenda items supplemented by focused discussions outside the Conference on Disarmament. Our delegation welcomed the discussions on fissile material with the involvement of experts from capital cities, as well as yesterday's focus on the role of civil society and how it can be further enhanced. We support these initiatives. At the same time, we recognize that they cannot substitute the core activity of the Conference. Austria therefore very much welcomes your efforts to enable early or, in fact, not so early any longer, agreement on a programme of work, and we would also like to comment on a possible way forward in this session.

Let me just make a couple of points. Delegations are very familiar with rule 28 of our rules of procedure, which asks for the annual adoption of a programme of work, including a schedule of its activities for the session. For my delegation, a programme of work is exactly that, in essence, a simple timetable allocating time for the different agenda items so that substantive work can be conducted effectively. We therefore appreciate your efforts on the timetable that you have prepared for the coming weeks. At the same time, in 2009, the Conference on Disarmament reached a consensus on an elaborate programme of work, often referred to as the "gold standard", and Austria would of course support the adoption of a similar programme of work, as well as one based on subsequent proposals or even differing proposals. This includes programmes that would not necessarily prejudge the concrete nature of our work. A programme is there, in fact, to enable substantive negotiations and not to pre-empt them; the substance of our work is already clearly laid out in our agenda. In addition, as we have just been reminded by our distinguished colleague from Brazil, the General Assembly has quite clear positions on how it wants the Conference on Disarmament to conduct its work.

Perhaps we can draw a lesson from the experience of 2009. The value of our decisions, as elsewhere, is determined by subsequent action – the deed that follows announcement. It is therefore my delegation's hope that we will not only agree to a

programme of work as soon as possible, but also break the Conference deadlock by faithfully starting to implement such a programme. A programme is only as good as the work it is enabling; it is not a substitute for work. We certainly stand ready to support you, the other Presidents of the Conference and others in this regard.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and I appreciate your comments this morning on how we will proceed with our work during your presidency. I can assure you of our fullest cooperation to facilitate your work. I would also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Grinius of Canada and his colleagues for the admirable manner in which they conducted their presidency. While I have the floor, I would like to express our deepest condolences to our colleague from New Zealand for the devastating earthquake in her country.

We have always maintained that the Conference on Disarmament does not operate in a vacuum. Our work depends on the Conference working in a manner which takes into account and caters for the security interests of all its members. We fully share the desire of our colleagues to start substantive work. We must also recognize that the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament has not existed over the last couple of years, but at least for the last 12 years, and that this stalemate is also a consequence of the security considerations of some States, or at least one State, which has ensured that the Conference on Disarmament has not made any substantive progress during the last decade or so.

My delegation has made abundantly clear the reasons that have compelled us to oppose the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Without going into the details, I would just like to remind everyone that it is due to the actions of certain States, in violation of their own non-proliferation commitments and in violation of the international non-proliferation regime, which seriously undermine our security interests and pose major security challenges to Pakistan. For these reasons we have been compelled to oppose negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament.

Nevertheless, Pakistan has always stated that it is ready to engage and begin substantive work and negotiations on other core issues that are on our agenda, such as nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and PAROS. We are also ready to negotiate on some of the other items on our agenda which are not considered for some reason as core items, but are still there on our agenda. I would also like to remind all our colleagues that the Conference on Disarmament is not here to negotiate an FMCT only. In fact, for many years an agenda item called FMCT was not even on the agenda. On the other hand, since its very inception, an item called nuclear disarmament has been on our agenda and, regrettably, no progress has been made at all in addressing this key issue.

Therefore, we should not allow disagreement between us on starting FMCT negotiations to block negotiations on other core issues on our agenda. We should engage in negotiations on those issues on which consensus is possible. Pakistan has clearly and categorically stated the reasons why we cannot join consensus on beginning negotiations on an FMCT. We have not heard any coherent and clear statements as to why negotiations on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances or PAROS cannot be held. I would like to hear such statements so that we are clear as to where we stand.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would encourage you to present a programme of work taking into account the existing realities in the Conference on Disarmament.

Ms. Sirisena (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, Sri Lanka wishes to associate itself with you and previous speakers in expressing its condolences to New Zealand for the devastating earthquake.

We would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is pleased to see Chile, a fellow G21 country, presiding over this forum. We witnessed your leadership in the meetings of the Biological Weapons Convention in 2010, and we are confident that you will discharge your responsibilities in this august body with the same professionalism and dedication. We assure you of our fullest support and cooperation in breaking the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference is at a crucial juncture, which warrants the Conference on Disarmament members continuing to make concerted efforts to reach early agreement on the programme of work for this annual session. In this regard, the proposal which you shared with regional coordinators yesterday in the presidential consultations, and with us today, to exchange views on the programme of work and also to have focused debates on all agenda items of the Conference, is both timely and noteworthy. We are confident that an open and transparent debate on the programme of work will enable you, as the President of the Conference on Disarmament, to identify elements for a possible draft programme of work. We suggest that you should undertake consultations on the draft elements in order to build and seek consensus in the Conference, while taking into account the concerns of all delegations.

In the statement delivered on 8 February 2011, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka already highlighted Sri Lanka's position on the various substantive issues in the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to reiterate that Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. In order to continue to preserve the unique role of this body, it is vital that the Conference should begin its substantive work based on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. We are of the view that focused debates on all agenda items could and should help towards a better understanding of our positions, thereby reinforcing your efforts as well as those of your successors in breaking the Conference on Disarmament impasse. We wish you a successful term as President of the Conference on Disarmament and reiterate our fullest cooperation with you.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the Algerian delegation would like to join the previous speakers in conveying its condolences and sympathy to the delegation of New Zealand in the wake of the natural catastrophe that has befallen the country.

Ambassador Jazairy, who is currently chairing an important meeting at the International Organization for Migration, and who is subsequently participating in another meeting in the context of the review of the Human Rights Council, would have liked to attend the present valuable session to express his full support and appreciation for the new President of the Conference, the Ambassador of Chile, Mr. Pedro Oyarce. He has, therefore, asked me to deliver this statement on his behalf.

"As the years go by, at the beginning of each session we hope to adopt a programme of work that would allow the Conference to assume its leading role. However, unfortunately, despite growing awareness of the escalating dangers that threaten our collective security, that threaten the very destiny of the entire human race, the Conference remains in a stalemate. The challenges that threaten global peace and security, primarily nuclear weapons, remain present. In this context, Algeria would very much like the Conference to play a leading role in laying the bricks and sowing the seeds of a world that keeps our children from the dangers of war, destruction and annihilation. In order to respond to these challenges and dangers we need to act collectively, keeping in mind a sense of the responsibility that we bear as members of this noble forum. Yes, what is required of us is dedicated work that embodies our collective commitment, based on mutual

understanding, to respond to the security concerns of all States while rejecting selfish and egotistical approaches. We began a constructive and fruitful dialogue under the Canadian presidency; what could be deduced from the discussion of the items on the agenda was the collective view of the importance of the Conference as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. In addition, these discussions evinced the collective will to work on the four core issues, namely, nuclear disarmament, a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for the production and other nuclear explosive devices, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. The Algerian delegation would like these discussions to be continued, in the hope of finding a formula that would allow us to start negotiating in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference contained in document CD/8/Rev.9. We thank the Ambassador of Brazil for the clarification that he provided in his statement on the provisions of the rules of procedure that would drive the adoption of a programme of work. The important thing is not to establish a programme or calendar of work that gives the impression that we are working; the important thing is for us to be able to transcend our national agendas in the interest of a comprehensive concept of collective security based on cooperation and trust rather than on doubt, fear and confrontation. Therefore, we encourage you, Mr. President, to continue your efforts to find any creative way to allow us to begin work. Any initiative in this direction should constitute a step forward that will consolidate the gains made up to now, not a step backwards. In order to break the deadlock in the Conference, a comprehensive and balanced approach that takes into consideration the security concerns of all is needed. In this context, decision CD/1864 of 2009 is a compromise formula which, while certainly incomplete at present, is an excellent basis from which to start substantive work.”

(spoke in French)

Mr. President, in your opening statement you mentioned the decision contained in document CD/1036 as a framework that might encourage the adoption of a programme of work. This decision was adopted in 1990, well before our current rules of procedure, which govern our work and which were adopted on 19 December 2003. I would therefore like to know to what extent this decision, which was taken a long time ago, is valid.

Second, Mr. President, your indicative timetable combines agenda items 1 and 2. We would like to remind you that these two questions have been paired for practical reasons, and that this does not change the fact that the issue of the negotiation of a treaty on fissile material has always been on the agenda under item 1, relating to nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, the merging of these two items does not affect the validity of agenda item 2, on the nuclear arms race. In the Algerian delegation’s view that item remains valid.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. We have taken note of your comments. I give the floor to the alternate representative of Cuba, Mr. Juan Antonio Quintanilla.

Mr. Quintanilla Román (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow us first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the great challenge represented by the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

We would also like to commend the efforts made by the Ambassador of Canada and his delegation during his presidency. We also join in the expression of sympathy for the people and Government of New Zealand.

The search for negotiated solutions at the multilateral level and the need to reach collective agreements are the only way to safeguard international peace and security.

To this must be added steps to escape the paralysis that has characterized the Conference in recent years. This is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament issues — this is a phrase that we all repeat, and to which I would add: “which does not negotiate” — and as such must be accorded the importance that entails.

Cuba thus supports the restarting of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament through the adoption and implementation of a programme of work that includes all the elements of the Conference’s agenda. Cuba calls for the necessary flexibility, grounded in respect for the rules of procedure and in constructive dialogue, to achieve the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work which takes into account all the real priorities in the field of disarmament and arms control.

Taking into account the elements outlined above, Cuba believes, along with many other countries, that nuclear disarmament must be the highest priority in our work.

We support the establishment of a committee and call for the start of negotiations on an instrument setting out a phased programme for the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified period of time and under strict international control.

Cuba rejects the efforts of some to ignore or minimize the importance of nuclear disarmament in order to impose a selective approach to non-proliferation.

Regarding a possible treaty to end the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, we are concerned that the approach adopted may be selective and politicized, given that we are dealing here mainly with western countries’ interests.

There are now calls worldwide for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is also necessary to take bigger steps in this area. Cuba supports the swift establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on an instrument to deal with this issue.

We have presented some of Cuba’s positions and concerns regarding the work of the Conference. We have many others, but for the sake of brevity we will reserve the right to speak on other occasions. Let me conclude, Mr. President, by reiterating the Cuban delegation’s full support for you and for the mandate and work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (spoke in Chinese): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference. We will actively support you and cooperate with you in your work.

The work of the Conference has made a good start this year. We quickly adopted an agenda, and we have held serious and productive discussions delving into the four core issues, namely nuclear disarmament, an FMCT, prevention of an arms race in outer space and security assurances. I believe that three things have led to this promising situation: firstly, all member States wish to promote the start of substantive work within the Conference as soon as possible; secondly, the relevant parties have respected and upheld the Conference’s rules of procedure; thirdly, Ambassador Grinias of Canada, who has just completed his term as President of the Conference, conducted his work in an open and transparent manner and listened attentively to member States’ views, while at the same time skilfully balancing all parties’ concerns, thus making possible a smooth and orderly start to the work of the Conference.

The Ambassador of Chile, the current President of the Conference, has just outlined his vision for the work to be carried out during his term of office: he wishes to continue pressing onward with the discussions on all the issues, and also to hold open and transparent discussions on the programme of work for the first time. China fully supports that approach, as put forward by the President in document CD/WP.564. The importance of

the Conference's programme of work is beyond doubt. It reflects the clear commitment of all member States to the work of the Conference, serves as the basis on which the Conference will discharge its duties as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and also ensures that the work of the Conference will be conducted in a smooth and orderly way. For this reason, the Conference's rules of procedure clearly stipulate that we must agree on an annual programme of work. In these circumstances we have to capture this positive momentum and strive to bring things together in a consensus, skilfully overcoming our differences and agreeing on a programme of work as soon as possible. To do so, we will have to take a few points on board.

Firstly, we have to be adept at seeking out and detecting positive trends and developments taking shape within the minutiae of the Conference's day-to-day work that will be conducive to reaching consensus. We have already had quite a few notable achievements in this regard. For example, so far this year the work of the Conference has started well, this in itself reflects a kind of consensus. How we might build on this foundation to push through the Conference's programme of work is a question that warrants serious consideration.

Secondly, we should remain committed to balanced treatment of the core issues, which themselves reflect the member States' different security concerns and priorities. Proper handling of these issues, with the Conference maintaining a delicate balance, will provide a formal guarantee that substantive work can begin on the various issues.

Thirdly, when seeking agreement on a programme of work, we should emphasize actual results rather than becoming bogged down on issues of specific wording. The Conference's programme of work is not an exercise in linguistics; its purpose is to break the political stalemate and to launch substantive work on the various issues. China hopes that through open, transparent and constructive discussions we can create favourable conditions for agreeing on a programme of work and starting substantive work as soon as possible.

Mr. President, China will do everything it can to support you in your work.

Mr. Gartshore (Canada): Mr. President, the delegation of Canada joins others in conveying its condolences to New Zealand for those affected by the earthquakes in Christchurch.

It is a pleasure to see Chile holding the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. The delegation of Canada looks forward to continued close collaboration with you, Ambassador Oyarce, with your delegation, and all of the other Conference on Disarmament Presidents and members in 2011.

My delegation welcomes this opportunity to discuss the matter of the Conference on Disarmament programme of work. Canada was among the vast majority of countries that actively supported and warmly welcomed the adoption of document CD/1864 in May 2009. Starting last autumn, Ambassador Grinius went to great lengths to consult the Conference on Disarmament membership individually and collectively on the question of a programme of work. As he reported in this chamber, Ambassador Grinius found that some delegations had taken mutually exclusive positions: those which required that a programme of work should contain a negotiating mandate on an FMCT; at least one delegation which could not accept such a mandate in a programme of work.

Canada understands the importance that many delegations attach to a programme of work with a negotiating mandate. The Conference on Disarmament is, after all, supposed to be a negotiating body. Nevertheless, during the Canadian presidency, several member States took the floor to urge the Conference to consider the adoption of a simplified programme of work – without subsidiary bodies or mandates. Indeed, as you have said

yourself, Mr. President, until 1997, the Conference on Disarmament adopted such a simple schedule of activities as its programme of work. This was consistent with the decision adopted by the Conference several years beforehand, in August 1990, in document CD/1036, a decision which I understand has not been overtaken by events. My delegation also has it on good authority that such a simplified programme of work would remain consistent with the current rules of procedure.

Over the past few weeks, this chamber has seen an extensive series of plenary discussions based on an indicative timetable. The Canadian presidency canvassed the other Presidents of the Conference and regional coordinators to determine whether such a timetable could form the basis of a programme of work, but no clear way forward had emerged by last week. Again, to repeat, Canada proposed to member States through the regional coordinators the idea of a programme of work comprised simply of a schedule of activities, which would leave open the possibility of future mandates and/or subsidiary bodies.

As Ambassador Grinius mentioned last week, the reaction we received to this idea was mixed. On one hand, some countries believed that the adoption of a simplified programme of work would allow us to “move forward”. On the other hand, some countries asked — and it is a very good question — what exactly such a programme of work would allow the Conference on Disarmament to do. The adoption of a simplified programme of work would not, in itself, resolve the question of mandates. If such a programme of work is adopted, the mandates of any subsidiary bodies would still have to be agreed. The last time this occurred was in 1998, when two ad hoc committees (on negative security assurances and FMCT) were established, by separate decisions. It may just be a coincidence, but the last time negotiations were held in the Conference it was because mandates became a part of its draft programmes of work and no negotiations have taken place since then.

The foregoing is a long way of saying something quite simple: if there is political will in the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate, then the Conference on Disarmament will negotiate, either by adopting a programme of work with a negotiating mandate, or by adopting a simple programme of work plus a subsequent decision or set of decisions. For our part, the Canadian delegation is ready to consider any proposal, or set of proposals, which would allow the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiating, *inter alia*, on what we believe to be the next logical non-proliferation and disarmament measure — an FMCT under the Shannon mandate.

Mr. Peláez (Argentina) (*speak in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me first to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. We are proud to have a sister country in the Chair of this important forum, in particular through your person. You can count on my delegation’s support.

We welcome the spirit of transparency shown today as we were invited to address in formal plenary session each member State’s position on the programme of work. Clarifying our interests vis-à-vis this disarmament forum is a basic tool for moving towards starting our work in 2011.

My delegation has on various occasions reiterated its flexibility regarding the form and content of the programme of work. We believe that the adoption of the programme of work contained in document CD/1864 in May 2009 reflected a convergence of interests among the member States of this Conference at a particular moment. In a short time, however, the fragility of that consensus became apparent. Now, we think we should not dwell on this situation, but rather continue to seek new areas of agreement.

The great detail of the exchanges that took place during the two weeks of the Canadian term in the Chair shows that there is more than one priority topic in our work. As my country’s delegation stated at the high-level meeting last September, one of our

delegation's priorities is to keep all negotiations on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation within this forum. My delegation will therefore support creative alternatives that would allow work in the Conference on Disarmament to continue, even if it does not constitute negotiation in the strict sense but rather an exchange or interaction representing a concrete step towards achieving that goal at a later stage.

My delegation can endorse the possibility of having simplified versions of a programme of work that include a timetable of activities based on the four priority topics. We are confident Mr. President, that on the basis of today's exchanges as well as ongoing bilateral consultations, you will in due course evaluate the desirability of moving forward in this or any other direction with respect to the submission of a programme of work, which we consider essential for tackling the year 2011.

In concluding, we join in the expressions of sympathy addressed to the delegation of New Zealand in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Mr. Zvekić (Serbia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I would first like to congratulate you, in your language and on behalf of the group of observer States in the Conference on Disarmament, on your assumption of the Conference presidency.

(*spoke in English*)

Your efforts in consulting and exploring the question of Conference on Disarmament enlargement with the Conference as a whole would be greatly appreciated. We would also like to thank those groups and members of the Conference on Disarmament who have expressed their support for the examination of membership expansion. Again, we only wish to begin discussion on this issue and not to prejudge or presume any particular outcome. Therefore, the call for the appointment of a special rapporteur is just meant to promote exploration of the issue of membership renewal.

We would also like to support your energy and creativity in seeking to advance the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Regrettably, we have not yet been able to adopt and implement a programme of work, but we will continue to contribute and hope that the Conference on Disarmament will achieve a balanced programme.

The informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament looks forward to working constructively and effectively with you as the President of the Conference.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador. Your Spanish is perfect. I would now like to give the floor to Mr. Matjila, deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): Mr. President, let me firstly express our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of New Zealand following the devastating earthquake in that country. Allow me also to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to assure you of our full cooperation and support.

South Africa has listened carefully to the plenary debates over the last few weeks on the issues on our agenda, and believes that this has again illustrated the importance that Conference on Disarmament members attach to the work of this Conference. We therefore appreciate the efforts of the Canadian presidency that allowed us to engage in a rich debate that we hope has moved us closer to ending the current impasse.

My delegation was particularly encouraged by some of the suggestions that were made during the course of the last three weeks aimed at getting the Conference back to its substantive work. In this context, a number of delegations referred to possible approaches to a programme of work that could allow the Conference on Disarmament to address its

core issues without the necessity of any further stalemate on mandates. In this regard, we recall in particular the references to decision CD/1036 on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, which envisaged a more streamlined and sensible programme of work.

While many Conference on Disarmament members continue to regard document CD/1864 as the “gold standard” for a programme of work that was the result of skilful diplomacy, it needs to be recognized that neither this nor any other formula on the different mandates for the different subsidiary bodies dealing with items on our agenda have led to a resumption of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament for many years. Judging by the debate this year, it seems still to be the case.

During discussions held in the First Committee during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly on the resolution on the Conference’s annual report to the General Assembly, my delegation warned against formulations that may “straitjacket” the Conference. Our intention was not to downplay the important breakthrough achieved in 2009, and it was not an indication that South Africa could not join consensus on such a programme of work. We merely noted that our rules make it very clear that the Conference on Disarmament will at the beginning of each annual session adopt its agenda and establish a programme of work for that year. We also argued that we needed to create space that could allow the infusion of new ideas in order to allow the Conference on Disarmament to execute its mandate.

My delegation would therefore like to state for the record that we remain flexible on any approach that would allow us to make progress. In this regard, and in full compliance with the rules of procedure of the Conference, we would be ready to consider a programme of work for 2011 that would contain only a schedule of meetings, as proposed by the Canadian President, or one that would establish subsidiary bodies to deal with the items on our agenda, without the need to prepare extensive negotiating mandates beforehand. It is our hope that members will again show the necessary political will and flexibility to enable us to take forward the work of this important body.

In the meantime, we appreciate your suggestion on the indicative timetable, as contained in document CD/WP.564.

Mr. Wollenmann (Switzerland): Mr President, as it is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of your presidency and assure you of Switzerland’s full support. I would also like to join other delegations who conveyed their condolences to the delegation of New Zealand for the tragic events that took place there.

Mr President, Switzerland welcomes your efforts to find an agreement on a programme of work, and we are happy to accept your invitation to participate in the exchange of views on a programme of work today. After the high-quality debates we witnessed in the first four weeks of the current session, it is only logical to move on, to build on what we have achieved and to turn our full attention to the early adoption of a programme of work.

Switzerland supported the decision contained in document CD/1864, in 2009, as well as the Brazilian proposal contained in document CD/1889, in 2010. Such approaches remain valuable options that the Swiss delegation could certainly support again this year.

However, as an alternative to such proposals, Switzerland, like so many other delegations who spoke this morning on this matter, sees the merits of a much more simple approach. In fact, we would be happy to support a programme of work, a workplan, consisting simply of a schedule of activities, as required by rule 28 of the rules of procedure, without going into the fine art of complex and interlinked mandates.

We share the view expressed by other delegations that the excessive focus on mandates has not at all been beneficial for the Conference on Disarmament. In fact, it has become a key problem of this body that its programme of work is today being interpreted as a complicated document that needs to be negotiated, giving a de facto veto to any of its 65 members who might wish to hold up serious work on any of the issues at hand. Instead of negotiating a programme of work, the Conference on Disarmament should simply establish such a programme and agree on it, without getting into pre-negotiations on the most difficult matters. In the absence of consensus for a programme of work with detailed mandates, such a “light” and simple programme of work could be a way out of the current deadlock.

In this regard, should the Conference on Disarmament not be able to establish a programme of work this year, the approach taken by the Canadian President — who has successfully organized and conducted structured plenary discussions — could be continued as a fallback option. We welcome the indicative timetable for the next four weeks contained in document CD/WP.564. In order to complement such a discussion, the model of holding side events could be pursued as well. In fact, Switzerland would continue to support delegations holding side events on any of the other three core issues, or on further specific aspects of a possible fissile material treaty to follow up on the successful side event organized last week by Australia and Japan.

As previously stated by this delegation, such efforts can only complement, but never substitute the formal work of the Conference on Disarmament. We need to establish proper working groups and start work now.

Switzerland is convinced that a negotiating forum like the Conference on Disarmament will continue to be needed in order to cope with present and future disarmament and non-proliferation challenges. Given its unique status, the Conference on Disarmament and all its member States bear an enormous responsibility to perform and deliver.

With a view to meeting these expectations, the Conference on Disarmament could once again, as done previously, appoint a special coordinator on the effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. In the past, the tasks of such coordinators included the review of the rules of procedure of the Conference, of regional groupings or of the way the Conference engages with civil society. Equally, other special coordinators were appointed in the past to seek the views of the member States on issues like the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament or to review the agenda.

Those are the issues that we should all reflect on more systematically, since they have kept us away from working and from fulfilling our mandate for far too long. We would be interested to hear other delegations’ views as to whether such an element could positively contribute to the actual situation.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*speak in Spanish*): My delegation is pleased to see the presidency held by a friendly and sister Latin American country, represented by yourself, Mr. President, and through you we thank the outgoing President, Ambassador Marius Grinius of Canada, for his efforts to restore substance to our discussions.

We also acknowledge the initiative by Australia and Japan and appreciated the opportunity to discuss substantive aspects of an agenda item at the parallel expert meetings that took place last week. Finally, I would like to join in the expressions of sympathy and support for the delegation of New Zealand on the occasion of the tragedy caused by the earthquake and the suffering in that friendly country and nation.

Mr. President, thank you for inviting us to exchange views on the adoption of a programme of work, which should be the priority topic for the Conference’s work. It is no

secret that, in my delegation's view, the Conference's mandate is to negotiate, and in this regard I believe we have demonstrated flexibility by joining the consensus of last year, or rather two years ago, document CD/1864, whose work programme did not present a negotiating mandate for each and every agenda item.

For Mexico this situation is odd, it is peculiar. We believe that the programme of work should be simple, an organizational timetable or work programme, without being, as some other delegations have said earlier, in itself an exercise in negotiation or pre-negotiation. Therefore, we would prefer, and would be ready to adopt, a simple programme of work focusing more on procedural matters than on the substance of each mandate. For our country it is unacceptable for the negotiation of the working groups' mandates to replace substantive work.

The opening of this door to the excessive interlinking of all the agenda items has been one of the obstacles, if not the main obstacle, to enabling the Conference to discharge its mandate. In Mexico's view, each item must be evaluated and assessed on its own merits, and without preconceived notions of what the outcome of the negotiation should be. Over the past 15 years my delegation has repeated that in order to reach an agreement, in order to reach a result, we must first negotiate. Thus, the involved arguments that surface in excessive negotiation of mandates are, we believe, designed to prevent negotiations that might lead to an agreement and to a generally applicable legally binding instrument.

Finally, I repeat, Mexico has shown flexibility, and my delegation will continue to accept proposals for a programme of work, whether a simplified version or the current one, such as those proposed in document CD/1864 and in document CD/1899, which was submitted by the delegation of Brazil last year and which we also support. However, I must repeat and emphasize that our country's preference, given that the negotiating mandate of this Conference must not be subject to discretionary approaches, is to have negotiations on all the agenda items. Above all, the priority for Mexico is to hold negotiations on nuclear disarmament in whatever manner the Conference deems prudent. But we should not overlook the fact that a negotiating mandate on nuclear disarmament has not appeared in the latest versions of the programme of work that have been tabled. While this is a matter of concern for our country, nevertheless, we have accepted it as part of a balanced programme of work and thus will not oppose a consensus in this regard.

Finally, I would like to recall what has been said here with regard to the proposals now on the table, which represent a basis for beginning to explore a new proposal for a programme of work. However, we cannot ignore or fail to point out that none of these proposals has been able to be implemented in the past 15 years, and that therefore we should be exploring new avenues.

Mr. van den IJssel (Netherlands): Let me start like others by conveying our condolences and sympathy to the people of New Zealand for the disaster that struck Christchurch and its surroundings. Let me also at the outset assure you, Mr. President, that you can count on our full support and cooperation during your presidency.

We welcome this opportunity to exchange views in the plenary on the modalities of a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament in 2011. We have a pragmatic approach to the programme of work. In our view, agreement on a programme of work is not a goal in itself, but a means of starting meaningful substantive work, which means that we should start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. A programme of work is a mere tool, an enabling instrument, as Ambassador Strohal said this morning, and it should not become an obstacle. If we could agree on negotiations without a mandate derived from a programme of work then that would have our full support as well. As stated before, the Netherlands is not married to the wording of documents CD/1864 or CD/1889, both of

which we wholeheartedly supported and still support. We still believe that a programme of work along the lines of these two documents is the most logical way forward.

We are flexible, but we are pragmatic at the same time. We could not support an approach to a programme of work that would mean merely changing the present consensus minus one member in the Conference on Disarmament for consensus minus three, four or more members. That, in our view, is not progress and will not bring us closer to our goal. We would also find it problematic to support the adoption of a programme of work that is lacking substance in the sense that it will not bring us closer to the start of negotiations. As said before, a programme of work is a tool and not an end in itself. Likewise, we see the adoption of such a programme as proof of the Conference on Disarmament making progress. We are favourable, however, to the idea of a schedule of activities for the Conference on Disarmament that would help us to organize our work. However, a schedule of activities can in no way substitute the need to come up with a solution for the continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and the need to adopt a mandate that would allow for the beginning of negotiations.

Mr. President, let me stress once again that you can count on our full support and our flexibility during your presidency.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the assumption of your post as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I appreciate your efforts, your consultations, your dedication and diligence, as well as those of your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Canada, in order to provide the necessary basis for the Conference on Disarmament to reach a decision on the programme of work. I assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to join other distinguished colleagues in expressing our deepest condolences to the distinguished Ambassador and people of New Zealand for the tragic events in that country.

We attach great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We are aware that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament put in place disarmament machinery and that there is a need to address challenges to its effectiveness by convening a fourth special session on disarmament. At the same time, it is important to recall the achievements of the international community through the United Nations disarmament machinery; it is important to preserve the nature, role and purpose of each part of this important machinery.

The first priority in the work of the Conference on Disarmament is to agree on and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. It is important to build upon the achievements of the Conference on Disarmament and prepare the ground for the Conference to start its substantive work. Bearing in mind the urgency of eliminating the threat posed by nuclear weapons to international security, we call on Conference on Disarmament members to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work based on its agenda and dealing with the core issues in accordance with the rules of procedure.

On many occasions in this Conference, I have expressed the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the importance of the Conference on Disarmament, as well as our priorities in the work of the Conference – a matter that has been a subject of serious consideration in recent years. At this juncture, I will briefly reiterate some key points to be considered during our deliberations on the programme of work for the 2011 session.

We have always requested the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation has always insisted on equilibrium and balance, and the need to take decisions by consensus in the Conference on Disarmament. The rules of procedure of the Conference are an instrument intended to

provide guidance and should be fully observed. We already recalled the need to move wisely and make safe and sound decisions that are acceptable to all.

In our view, a comprehensive and balanced programme of work to enable the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations on the four core issues can best serve the purposes of the Conference on Disarmament as well as the safety and security of the whole international community. Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for my delegation and for most members of the Conference. In the substantive discussions held in the last few plenary meetings, it was crystal clear that nuclear disarmament is the top priority for a great majority of States from different regions. I am pleased that the priority of the Secretary-General of the United Nations also coincides with the top priority of this majority. Nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority for a better and safer world. The Conference on Disarmament should agree on establishing an ad hoc committee to start negotiations on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible. A nuclear weapons convention which provides an international legally binding instrument for a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is a long-sought aspiration and a topic ripe for negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament. The programme of work should provide a negotiating mandate on this issue.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Until such time, a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued, as a matter of priority, through the establishment of an ad hoc negotiating committee in the Conference on Disarmament. We support the start of negotiations in the Conference on the conclusion of a legally binding treaty to ban the possibility of an attack from space or a war in space and to prevent the weaponization of space; this legally binding instrument should increase the security of all nations and meet the necessary requirement for the peaceful uses of space.

Concerning an FMCT, we said without ambiguity that the issue of stocks and verification should be covered under a possible treaty. An FMCT should be a clear and meaningful step for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. It should be a comprehensive, non-discriminatory, internationally and effectively verifiable treaty. Past production and existing stocks, as well as the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, must be covered under the scope of the treaty. Any negotiation on an FMCT which does not include stocks would have no substance and consequently be fruitless. I think we have to be clear in our programme of work on this important subject.

Mr. President, my delegation supports you in your efforts to bring the Conference to a consensus decision on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. We request you to continue your consultations as a matter of priority in order to have all members on board and take a decision by consensus on the programme of work.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): Mr. President, first of all, let me also offer our sincerest condolences to New Zealand and our support for the Chilean presidency. Chile is a leader in international forums around the world, and those of us in Geneva have been able to witness first-hand the personal leadership of Ambassador Oyarce as he so skilfully led the 2010 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. I wanted to say that I very much appreciated the wise and comprehensive thoughts you offered today in your vigorous efforts to get this body back to work. We will, of course, reflect on your words and those of the other ideas expressed here today.

I was struck by a few comments: for example, our Dutch colleague, who mentioned that a programme of work is a tool not an end in itself. I also noted the comments of our Algerian colleague, who said that document CD/1864 provides a sound foundation for our

work. An FMCT, as so many have noted today, is a goal repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly, by consensus by this body in document CD/1864, at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and more recently by President Obama and the President of China, who called for negotiations in this body. Like others, I have been heartened by the enhanced tempo of our work this year, thanks to the Canadian presidency, and we look forward to working with you, Mr. President, and all of our colleagues to translate all of this into real work in this body.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, just a couple of words to Ambassador Higgin: I was really sorry to see the pictures this morning from Christchurch, and I know that there will be some very difficult days ahead for the people of New Zealand and of Christchurch; our thoughts are with you.

Ambassador Oyarce, my colleague from the United States has already mentioned how you led us through the 2010 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. In that you share something else with Ambassador Grinius – having gone through a year of the BWC. There I noted the ability of both of you, now and last year, to recognize the interests of different groups and different regions and to take them into account, but ultimately to refuse to be held by stalemate: you kept us moving forward when we could have got very stuck.

Thank you for giving us an indicative timetable. It is very helpful to have that straight away so that we can see what the next few weeks will bring us. I wanted to reflect a little bit on what has been said about document CD/1864. The representative of Algeria actually took the words out of my mouth when he said that it is a consensus solution, it is a sound foundation to work towards our objectives. I do not want to dwell too much on document CD/1864 other than to say that the items covered in the document have been, in many ways, validated by appearing both in First Committee resolutions, as the Ambassador of Brazil mentioned, but also in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, as the Ambassador of the Philippines mentioned. Thus there is certainly no disagreement that the items in document CD/1864 are the ones that we are most interested in; this has been further backed up by the last few weeks of discussion.

My delegation has made a point of making statements on every single item to show that we are interested in engaging substantively on all of them; engaging substantively on the items, but not engaging substantively and endlessly on programme-of-work discussions or agenda discussions. We really do want to do work here, with the overall objective being to get closer to that world free of nuclear weapons about which many of our politicians and we ourselves have talked. All of this is a long way of saying that the United Kingdom is very open to working with you, to seeing how we can take things forward; but the main thing should be that we do not allow ourselves to get stuck. We have had a little injection of movement to the Conference on Disarmament, and, now that the patient has come off life support, we ought to carry on with the cure and let you be the surgeon and the doctor that guides us through. Perhaps too many surgeons and nurses and doctors might not be the best thing; we therefore place our trust in you to guide us through.

The President (*speak in Spanish*): Thank you. I will try to be a surgeon, but we are all here in a sort of hospital, trying to give life to the organization. Thank you.

I give the floor to the Ambassador of New Zealand, Ambassador Higgin.

Ms. Higgin (New Zealand): Mr. President, I would like first of all to respond to the expressions of sympathy here this morning to the Government and people of New Zealand regarding the earthquake that we had some hours ago on South Island. Thank you all for your very kind expressions of sympathy.

Next, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and to wish you the full support of New Zealand and all colleagues here for your efforts. My thanks also to your predecessor, Ambassador Grinius, and to his colleagues from Canada, for the indefatigable way in which they tried to move forward and make progress in the Conference on Disarmament.

We also welcome your efforts to bring us closer to progress and a programme of work. We agree that it is not the responsibility of our President alone, but a collective responsibility to live up to the expectations of the General Assembly and, indeed, of the international community, that the Conference on Disarmament must be able to justify the resources allocated to it by negotiating on substance rather than procedure.

I note your observation this morning that there is a clear will to push for substantive work in this body, and certainly that is my delegation's strong wish. We also note the remark made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations here on 26 January 2011 that "there is almost universal support for negotiations on [a fissile material] treaty", and we support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Conference on Disarmament should find a creative and informal way of moving forward on this. New Zealand welcomes any proposal that offers the prospect of the Conference dealing in a substantive way with fissile material and the other major international issues on our agenda. We agree with your remark this morning, Mr. President, that there is no fundamental need for the programme of work to contain a detailed mandate for our work. Indeed, as you noted, that was the approach followed here before 1,997.

As I have already said, my delegation supports any proposal at all that serves to renew the supply of oxygen to this body and makes us able to move forward on substantive negotiations, including on the basis of the Shannon mandate for a fissile material treaty. If a minimal calendar, as you refer to it, is the best way to achieve this, we would also support that. I would like to assure you, Mr. President, of New Zealand's fullest support for your tenure as our President.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Mr. President, I wish you every success in your presidency, and I assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation. I did not intend to make a formal statement today, but in the light of what has been said, I want to make a few points.

When I hear that the session has got off to a good start, I have to underline that the purpose of this body is to negotiate instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The number of statements which we have heard is not, in my view, evidence per se of the vitality of this body. The problem is, as we all know, that there is no agreement on the topic of negotiation, or topics of negotiation, and that there are different approaches to the priorities which delegations consider as ripe for negotiation. In the meantime, we engage in discussions on core issues, and we had a number of good discussions in recent weeks. We also had excellent discussions in side events on the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty. In my opinion this was very useful, because at least it showed that there are very many issues which need further exploration, and it would be good if many delegations would participate in such exchanges. However, I want to be clear again. The focus of our work must remain negotiations, and discussions are only a substitute. Now, the big question, of course, is: how do we get into discussion mode? There, I have to say that I would very much like to encourage the presidency to continue its efforts to find a programme of work.

Of course, there are different understandings of what a programme of work may mean. It may mean a very formal framework, but it may mean other things as well. Now, as far as more recent approaches to this issue are concerned, I would like to reiterate that we are happy to continue to work based on documents CD/1864 or CD/1889, adding that we

are not married to their exact wording; but we would be perfectly happy to continue to base our work on such efforts. Let's put it that way!

However, we are also happy to explore other possibilities, and I listened with great interest to what you said, Mr. President, in your opening remarks in that regard. If there are other possibilities, like a schedule of activities of meetings, we would be quite happy to look into that, as long as it helps us to get into a process which leads us into negotiations. I would encourage you on both counts: on the formal side with the traditional or classical programme of work (documents CD/1864 and CD/1889); but also with your attempts to sound out whether it is possible to arrive at a consensus on a lighter approach. Let's put it this way: that you report to us as transparently as possible on how things stand.

I think that it is important for all delegations to know how close we are to a consensus, whether we are in a consensus – minus-one or minus-two or minus-three situation. We have heard today that there are other issues on which delegations would like to have negotiations. I am aware of that; but at the end of the day, it is important to know whether we are close or less close to a consensus. One of the problems of the Conference on Disarmament is that it is often not so easy to understand what the situation actually is. Therefore, I trust that the President will inform us as openly and transparently as possible as to what the situation actually is.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency at this very important juncture of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to join all other delegates who expressed their condolences and sympathy for the disaster caused by the earthquake in New Zealand. Japan is one of the countries which suffers from earthquakes quite often, thus our sympathy is all the more deep for our New Zealand friends.

Mr. President, I appreciate your leadership in inviting us to discuss the question of a programme of work on the first day of your presidency. As one of the delegates who had suggested the discussion on a programme of work, referring in particular to the original programme of work which basically contained a schedule of activities only, I certainly think that it is one alternative that we can consider for starting the yearly session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Yet at the same time, as some delegates like the representative of Canada pointed out, the programme of work, or simplified programme of work, should not be a substitute for the mandate or schedule of activities with which the Conference on Disarmament will start its substantive work. If we think about the simplified programme of work, there will not be much discussion on further negotiations. Therefore, we need to think about at least two points very clearly. Firstly, even if we agree on, the simplified programme of work, we probably need to continue to discuss, or to try to agree on, the mandate for and setting up of the necessary subsidiary bodies. Secondly, because of this further discussion on the subsidiary bodies or the mandate on the discussions and negotiations on important issues, the simplified programme of work should be a flexible one. It should allow for a review of the schedule itself, with a possible separate agreement on the mandate for subsidiary bodies on specific issues.

Regarding that separate agreement, our basic understanding of how the subsidiary bodies should be set up is that, if there is an important issue that needs to be substantively discussed in separate subsidiary bodies, we should set up those subsidiary bodies or working groups. When we consider that an issue is ripe for negotiations, we should also set up subsidiary bodies for negotiations. Document CD/1864 — the consensus agreement — contains a very balanced and very constructive compromise. My delegation still believes that documents CD/1864 and CD/1889 should be the basis for the kind of agreement we

have to seek during the course of this year's session in order to reach agreement on the start of substantive work.

The President (*speak in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador. I give the floor to Ambassador Andanje, Permanent Representative of Kenya.

Mr. Okeyo (Kenya): Mr. President, a small correction – I am the Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya. I join other delegations in conveying our condolences to the Government and people of New Zealand following the devastating earthquake.

Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and on providing us with the opportunity to present our views on elements to be included in a programme of work. I assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Marius Grinius of Canada, for his dedication and commitment in guiding the work of the Conference on Disarmament during his tenure: his enthusiasm and determination were indeed commendable.

Over the last month, we have had constructive exchanges which have been useful. I believe that they have contributed to deepening our understanding of the various positions, the issues of priority to the delegations, as well as of national perspectives and, of course, concerns. Delegations have also presented positive proposals, such as that contained in document CD/1864 and on the setting up of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. In my delegation's view, all these proposals could provide the basis or framework for substantive discussions on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

Unfortunately, despite the positive steps taken, we have been unable to make any headway. We are yet to adopt a programme of work, let alone get down to substantive issues, including mandates and negotiations. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that we must work towards the adoption of a programme of work in accordance with the rules of procedure, which are central to our deliberations in the Conference on Disarmament. We can have numerous discussions, as we have done; however, if we cannot place them in the context of establishing a programme of work, our efforts will be meaningless.

My delegation is convinced that we need to build on the momentum established under the Canadian presidency. The presidency of Chile provides us with this opportunity, which will require us to live up to our stated commitments, to take concrete steps to promote our collective goal of nuclear disarmament within the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation remains flexible. I reiterate the support of my delegation to you, Mr. President. We look forward to continuing working with you and other delegations.

Mr. Jon Yong Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): In the first place, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to join others in expressing its condolences to New Zealand.

Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency and express the hope that tangible progress will be achieved in the work of the Conference on Disarmament under your able guidance. I would also like to thank the Canadian Ambassador and his team for their sincere and tireless efforts while holding the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament from the beginning of the year.

Nuclear disarmament is the highest priority for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which therefore always supports global efforts for the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. As far as the programme of work is concerned, my delegation does not think that the problem lies in the procedure or any other working method. There is a political obstacle before us. It is therefore our hope that delegations will demonstrate the political will to move the work of the Conference on Disarmament forward.

In conclusion, Mr. President, my delegation would like to reassure you of its full support and cooperation.

Mr. O'Shea (Ireland): At the outset, I would like to join other colleagues in extending words of condolence to Ambassador Higgin on behalf of the people of New Zealand for the terrible tragedy which struck the city of Christchurch yesterday.

Secondly, Mr. President, I would also associate myself with the kind words of welcome that have been addressed to you as you take over the presidency of our Conference. Please be assured of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the course of your duties. I would also take advantage of this opportunity to express our appreciation to the delegation of Canada for the skilful manner in which Ambassador Marius Grinius undertook his duties. In fact, long before he took up his post as President of the Conference on Disarmament he was preparing, and I think we saw the results of his hard work in the last few weeks and in the general positive atmosphere which prevails in the Conference.

On the programme of work, Mr. President, thank you for offering us the opportunity to share our views on this subject here today. Like all other delegations in this Conference, my delegation agreed to the adoption of the programme of work contained in document CD/1864 which, as has already been mentioned this morning, is a compromise; it contains perhaps not the full priorities of every delegation, but it was something which all member States of the Conference on Disarmament were able to live with at the time. Similarly, last year we supported the proposal put forward by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Brazil when he held the presidency of the Conference (document CD/1889) and we would be happy to commence work based on either of those documents.

However, because the Conference on Disarmament has been languishing for so many years without undertaking substantive work, we are interested in looking at alternative approaches, if those approaches are able to bring us closer to our function of negotiation. We therefore support the remarks by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in that regard, and also support the explanatory remarks which were contained in your opening statement.

I would have to diverge perhaps slightly from the words of the Ambassador of Germany as to what constitutes a classical or traditional programme of work. As you mentioned in your opening statement, Mr. President, from 1990 to 1997, every year the Conference on Disarmament adopted a programme of work in simplified form. It is only since the Conference on Disarmament has tried to complicate the programme of work by including in it mandates and detailed provisions regarding working groups and subsidiary bodies that we have, in fact, been unable to adopt a programme of work. Thus, there have been many more simple versions of the programme of work adopted and only one, although I'm not sure what the programme of work for the 1998 session looked like, but certainly not many of the more complicated versions. Perhaps we should therefore stick with what we have been successful in doing rather than what we have failed to do.

My delegation is of course under no illusions that the adoption of such a simplified programme of work would magically make all of the difficulties disappear overnight, but we do believe, as was mentioned by the representative of Switzerland earlier this morning, that excessive focus on a detailed programme of work and the mandates contained therein have distracted the Conference on Disarmament from its actual functions. It has set up a false negotiation; we have been negotiating on the contents of a programme of work rather than negotiating on the substance. We are of course obliged to adopt a programme of work, but if that obligation could be fulfilled by adopting something simpler, perhaps we could then get down to discussing, in a more clear and a more open fashion, the actual issues on

which we are supposed to be working. We think that there would be value in that; we would be discussing the parameters of actual work and the substantive items on the agenda.

We very much agree with the remarks of the German Ambassador that openness and transparency are very important and that the President should always keep the membership very well informed – and I am sure you will, Mr. President. However, we are not entirely convinced of the value of conducting consultations through regional groups. We think that it would hinder openness and transparency, and we would urge you, as much as possible, to have discussions similar to this one, where all of the members of the Conference on Disarmament are able not only to voice their own opinions, but also to listen to the opinions of others directly, without the filter that is sometimes imposed by regional groups. Having said that, Mr. President, I would like to conclude by wishing you, once again, all the best for your term as President of the Conference.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*speak in French*): The Algerian delegation has listened with keen interest to the statements made here by some delegations in favour of the simplified approach to the programme of work.

The Algerian delegation does not have a precise position on this issue. Nevertheless, we would like to raise a few questions concerning this trend. The main question concerns the point of departure of these simplified mandates or this simplified work programme, especially as regards the treaty banning the production of fissile material. We know that this question is not on the agenda. Member States had agreed to negotiate this point under item 1, and the wording of the Shannon mandate, “ban on the production of fissile material”, incorporates a painstakingly negotiated mandate. If we adopt this simplified approach, does that mean we are abandoning the Shannon report and the mandate it contains and returning to square one, or will we use the result of a mandate as our starting point? The Algerian delegation would like to bring this question to Conference members’ attention so that the process we define together will allow us to move forwards and not backwards.

Ms. Yustisianingrum (Indonesia): Mr. President, it would be very remiss not to add our voice to what has been conveyed by colleagues. Therefore, first of all, allow me to join others in conveying our deepest condolences and sympathy for the Government and the people of New Zealand following the devastating earthquake. Allow me also to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I believe that under your able guidance, we will be able to have successful deliberations. I would like to extend our support to you in the discharge of your duties.

For the past few years my delegation has supported every effort dedicated to moving our work forward. In 2009, as stated in the statement of the Indonesian Ambassador, we supported the joint consensus for a programme of work despite the fact that, as some said, it is not perfect. In 2010, we stated that the draft programme of work proposed by the Brazilian Ambassador was a good basis for negotiation. Therefore, we will not stop now from supporting any effort dedicated to the formulation of a programme of work in order to further our work. We welcome your proposal, as set out in document CD/WP.564, and encourage you, Mr. President, to conduct bilateral consultations with member States in a transparent manner.

As far as the agenda and the programme of work are concerned, nuclear disarmament will continue to be our highest priority and we will continue to support you in our future endeavours.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): Of course, the President will sum up the discussion, because this has been a very interesting discussion. A new proposal, a fairly new proposal, was made by some delegations concerning the simplified agenda. In recent years, the Conference has been doing a lot of talking, but

producing very few documents that have not even been adopted. We have our programme of work, but it so happens that we do not have consensus on this programme of work. I thought that if those delegations come up with something and we do not know what at the moment (because some people might be critical, while others might say this is a good thing), we do not know what a simplified programme of work is. Actually, this simplified version might work once we see the ideas on paper. I would therefore be very interested if the member States that raised the issue reproduced their ideas on paper, and then it will be more or less clear where we stand in the Conference on the programme of work. You never know, sometimes little things can work better than big things. Simple things might work better than complicated things, but let's see first what it is.

The President (*speak in Spanish*): Thank you for your observations. We have concluded an interesting initial discussion, and I want to start by saying that I wish to highlight what the Ambassador of Germany said when he stressed the value of transparency. I think it is important for us to take stock here, in this room, in a transparent and formal manner, of where we stand. Are we closer or farther away? Our goal is to keep the Conference informed from the moment we are dealing with the programme of work, not to engage in theoretical speculations, but to see where we stand in the field, so to speak. It is clear that the current President and all the Presidents have a responsibility with regard to this year's work, but I also insist that the Conference has a collective responsibility. It is clear that the programme of work is, as has been pointed out here quite clearly, a means, an instrument, and what we will seek, I repeat, what we will seek is to produce an inclusive balance or equilibrium. If we are talking about rules of consensus, we have to retain the idea, the concept of inclusiveness. I think it has been noticed that there is an important, I would say positive evaluation, as a basic element for continuing to work, to build an agreement, the proposals 1864 and 1889, but obviously they have their limitations, but there are important elements. And we can also notice another aspect that I emphasized at the beginning, which is the need to clarify, to see the scope, as the Secretary of the Conference pointed out, of a simplified programme of work.

There is much theoretical analysis, but let's see what that would mean in practice: simplified or simple? I am also concerned about the question of negotiating mandates in the sense that they could become an insurmountable obstacle to moving ahead. We will need to see how the question of mandates can be addressed. There are ideas; let's see if a fresh approach can be integrated. Another concern is what has been described as excessive interaction among the mandates. I believe that the representative of Mexico referred to that. I want to tell you that we, from the Chair, will — I hope, with absolutely active collaboration, not solidarity but active collaboration, active work — continue to work, along with all of this year's Presidents, to generate what I would call a dynamic to bring us closer to establishing a programme of work that is acceptable to all of us. In short, we need, in my humble opinion, not only ideas but also political will. If we are looking for a mathematical formula, there it is, ideas plus political will. In the coming weeks we will make efforts to that end and will try to continue holding consultations and, if possible, to put some ideas on paper — it will not hurt. During the past 15 years an enormous number of ideas, initiatives, projects and proposals have already been presented and reviewed. Let us try to work on something new.

With this we will close this morning's debate. I thank you all for your statements. Before concluding today's substantive work and adjourning the meeting I would like to inform you that the secretariat invites delegations to make any necessary corrections to the list of participants. If there are any comments, kindly transmit them to Ms. Norma Roulin, who is providing efficient cooperation in this area. Therefore, if you have any comments, please transmit them to her.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 24 February at 10 a.m. The meeting stands adjourned.



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